new National Highway. Presently there is a ban on declaration of new National Highways due to funds constraint. Government may however consider declaration of very limited lengths of a few State Highways into National Highways during the course of Tenth Five Year Plan, keeping in view the traffic needs, *inter-se* priority and availability of funds, after the ban is lifted.

Maintenance and Improvement of National Highways in Assam

1018. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the plan and progress made on repair, improvement, widening and strengthening of NHs in Assam during the current financial year and the sectoral outlays proposed for the Tenth Plan indicating against each road including four laning;

(b) the status of NH funds released during the last three years;

(c) the progress made in construction of approach road to Bogibeel bridge construction on either side of Brahmaputra in Assam with indication of alignments finalized both way; and

(d) the details of the steps taken and target set to fill the pits and potholes on NH 52 and NH 37 to make them fit for human?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS [MAJOR GENERAL (RETD.) (B.C. KHANDURI)]: (a) Improvement of National Highways in Assam is done by three agencies viz. the Assam PWD, the Border Roads Organization (BRO) and National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). During the current year, for repair, improvement, widening and strengthening of National Highways in the State, an amount of Rs. 132.74 Crores has been allocated and against this, an expenditure of Rs. 60.64 Crores has been incurred up to October 2002. It is too early to indicate the allocation for the remaining 4 years of the 10th Plan for Assam State. Four laning of 728 km of National Highways in Assam under East West Corridor of National Highway Development Project (NHDP) is targeted to be completed by December, 2007.

(b) The allocation and expenditure on National Highways in the last 3 years are as follows:

Year	Allocation (Rs. in crore)	Expenditure (Rs. in crore)
1999-2000	99.16	77.47
2000-2001	136.26	116.81
2001-2002	158.73	157.33

(c) NH-52B, linking NH-37 at km. 580.79 and NH-52 at km. 307.83, forms the approaches of the Bogibeel bridge. The final location survey has been completed for the construction of the approaches.

(d) The BRO and State PWD are already in the process of restoration of damages on NH-52 and NH-37 respectively. The work is likely to be completed within the current financial year.

National Highway Status to State Roads

1019. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that nearly 316 requests from various States seeking grant of National Highway status for their State roads are pending with Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the criteria adopted for reviewing the requests during the Tenth Plan period; and

(d) by when, sanction are likely to be accorded to the Highways of inter-state importance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS [MAJOR GENERAL (RETD.) (B.C. KHANDURI)]: (a) to (d) All 316 proposals received from the State Governments have been returned to them in June, 2002 for review based on the revised criteria for declaration of new National Highways. Presently, there is a ban on declaration of new National Highways due to funds constraint. The Government may, however, consider declaration of very